

 <p>MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM</p> <p>CHILD CARE CENTERS POLICY &amp; PROCEDURE MANUAL</p>	ISSUED  3/91	REVISED  1/16	CHAPTER  10	SECTION  10.8
CHAPTER Chapter 10. Free and Reduced Price Meals	SUBJECT Determination of Eligibility – Pricing Center			

Center personnel shall review the income eligibility application to determine if the child is eligible for free or reduced price meals. The following steps shall be taken when determining the eligibility of the child:

- The IEF shall be reviewed by the authorized center personnel to determine if all parts (1-4) of the application have been completed. The application is not valid if not fully completed by the parent or guardian.
- The center personnel shall determine the child's claiming category based on the income guidelines or categorical eligibility. Income guidelines can be found in the booklet entitled "Income Eligibility Guidance for the Child and Adult Care Food Program" or on the web at [http://health.mo.gov/living/dnhs\\_pdfs/R\\_CACFP\\_IEGbook\\_child.pdf](http://health.mo.gov/living/dnhs_pdfs/R_CACFP_IEGbook_child.pdf). A child is categorically eligible if the parent or guardian receives food stamps or Temporary Assistance (TA) payments and the food stamp or TA case number is given on the income eligibility form and the parent or guardian has signed and dated the form. If a food stamp or TA case number is not given on the income eligibility form, the parent or guardian must complete the entire application, providing household size and income levels.
- If the information given by the parent is incomplete, or does not meet eligibility criteria, the child must be claimed as paid.
- Child care centers have flexibility concerning the effective date of certification for Program benefits. The date to be used to make this determination may be either the date the parent or guardian signed the income eligibility form or the date on which the center official signs the form to certify eligibility of the child. However, if the date of parent signature is not within the month of certification or the immediately preceding month, the effective date must be the date of certification. Child care centers must decide which date they will rely on as the effective date and apply this date consistently to all income eligibility forms received.
- Center personnel shall inform parents or guardians by written notice of the income eligibility determination. This written notice shall include at a minimum:
  - Results of the income eligibility determination;
  - The reason for the denial of benefits (if applicable);
  - Notification of the right to appeal;
  - Instructions on how to appeal; and
  - A statement reminding parents that they may reapply for free or reduced price benefits at any time during the year.
- Documentation of ineligibility shall be retained by the institution for a period of three years.
- The IEF for each child is effective for one year. IEFs should be considered current and valid until the last day of the month in which the form was dated one year earlier. Each year the parent or guardian must complete a new IEF. Do not use *White-Out* or change a date or reuse a completed form.

- Once approved for free or reduced meal benefits, a child is eligible for those benefits for one full year after the IEF has been signed and dated, regardless of changes in income or household size that may occur throughout the year. Centers may not re-evaluate IEFs when new income guidelines are issued in July of each year. For example, if a parent completes an IEF in January 2015, eligibility will be based on income guidelines issued in July 2014. When the new income guidelines are issued in July 2015, the center may not re-evaluate the IEF completed in January 2015 using the new income guidelines. The eligibility must continue to be based on the income guidelines in effect at the time the form was initially completed and reviewed.

Reference: 7 CFR 226.23(c)